

Prabuddha Bharata

उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत



प्राप्य वराजिबोधत ।

Katha Upa. I. iii. 4

Arise! Awake! And stop not till the Goal is reached.

—Swami Vivekananda.

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CONVERSATIONS AND DIALOGUES OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA,

(RECORDED BY A DISCIPLE.)

[*Translated from Bengali.*]

XIII.

[Place :—*Belur, the rented Math premises.*

Year : 1898.

Subjects :—*The birthday anniversary at the Math of Sri Ramakrishna-deva.—Investiture by Swamiji of some non-Brahmin followers with the holy thread.—The loving cordiality with which Srijiut Girish Chandra Ghosh used to be received at the Math.]*

In the year of Swamiji's return from the West; the birthday festivities of Sri Ramakrishna-deva were celebrated in the temple-garden of Rani Rashmani. But for various reasons, the celebration ceased to take place at the temple-garden next year. The Math had been removed during the year from Alambazar to a rented garden-house on the Ganges at Belur, belonging to Babu Nilambar Mukherji, and shortly after, the site of the present Math had been purchased. But still the anniversary celebration this year could not be held on this site, as it was then full of jungles and at places quite uneven. So the public celebration was held this time at the well-known temple buildings of the Daws.

Previous to this celebration, on the second day after the new moon of the month of *Phalgun*, the ceremony of Sri Ramakrishna's nativity was observed at Nilambar Babu's garden-house, and a day or two after that Sri Ramakrishna's portrait and other holy adjuncts were taken over to the newly-purchased site for the present Math and were installed there with due solemnities and sacraments. Swamiji was staying at the time at the garden-house of Nilambar Babu, and arrangements had been made for the *Tithipuja* (Nativity) on a grand scale. The chapel was filled with the freshest and nicest offerings and adjuncts of worship according to Swamiji's directions, and he was moving

about that day, himself taking account of everything necessary for the great ceremony.

On the auspicious morning of the great day, everybody was joyful, and nothing passed among the *bhaktas* (followers) there but topics touching the Master. Swamiji was now standing before the chapel busy inspecting the preliminaries of the worship.

This inspection over, Swamiji asked the disciple, "Well, you have brought the holy threads, I hope?"

Disciple.— Yes, Sir, I have. Everything is ready as you desired. But, Sir, I am at a loss to make out why so many holy threads are in requisition.

Swamiji.— Every *dvijati** (twice-born) has a right to investiture with the holy thread. The Veda itself is the authority in this matter. Whoever will come to this sacred birthday of our Thakur, I shall invest him with the holy thread. These people have fallen from their true status, and the scriptures say that after true purification those fallen in the way earn the right to investiture with the holy thread. This is the great day of Thakur's nativity, and men will be purified by taking his name. So the assembled *bhaktas* are to be invested with the holy thread to-day; do you now understand?

Disciple.— I have collected, Sir, quite a good number of holy threads according to your instructions, and after the worship I shall with your permission invest the *bhaktas* with them.

Swamiji.— To *bhaktas* besides the Brahmins give this *mantra* of Gáyatri (here Swamiji recites to the disciple the special Gáyatris of the twice-born who are non-Brahmins). By degrees all the people of the land have to be lifted to the position of Brahmins, not to speak of the *bhaktas* of our

Thakur. Each Hindu, I say, is a brother to every other, and it is we who have degraded them by our outcry, "Don't touch," "don't touch!" And so the whole country has been plunged to the utmost depths of meanness, cowardice and ignorance. These men have to be uplifted; words of hope and faith have to be proclaimed to them. They have to be assured, "You are also men like us and you have all the rights that we have."

Disciple.— Yes, Sir, it should be so.

Swamiji.— Now, please ask those who will take the holy thread to finish their bath in the Ganges. Then after prostrations before Thakur, they will have their investiture.

According to these directions, about 40 to 50 *bhaktas* after ablutions in the Ganges received the Gáyatri from the disciple and were invested with the holy thread. The Math was in a commotion. Those who went through the ceremony bowed again before Thakur and made their obeisance also to Swamiji. When receiving them Swamiji's face beamed with profound delight. A little after this, Sriji Girish Chandra Ghose arrived at the Math from Calcutta.

Now arrangements for music were made ready at the desire of Swamiji, and Sannyasins of the Math now commenced decorating Swamiji's person to the top of their bent—with ear-rings of shell, with camphor-white ashes besmeared all over the body, with the Yogi's plaited locks flowing down to the feet, with the trident placed in the left hand, with bracelets of *rudraksha* beads on both arms, and three-filleted garlands of the same beads hanging down to the knees! It is impossible to describe the sublime expression which shone forth from Swamiji's form after these embellishments. Whoever saw it that day declared with unanimity that *Bála-bhairava* (Shiva's transfiguration as a youthful *Bhairava*) was manifesting Himself in Swamiji's person on the occasion! Swamiji also anointed

* The Brahmins, Kshatriyas and the Vaishyas are all *dvijatis*.

the persons of the other monks with the sacred ashes and they appeared like so many embodied *Bhairavas** around Swamiji so that the Math seemed that day to emulate the glories of the Kailasa mount! One's mind is filled with joy even at the remembrance of that spectacle.

Seated in the "lotus-seat" posture facing the West, with his hands free to hold the *Tānpura*, Swamiji chanted now with the sweetest intonation and voice the Sanskrit hymn beginning with कृजन्तं रामरामेति ('repeating in a low tone the name of Rama' etc.), and when the chanting came to a close, he went on repeating the holy words, "Rām, Rām, Sri Rām, Rām." Heavenly nectar seemed to be dripping from the sound of every letter as it was being uttered! His eyes were half-closed and the *Tānpurā* was giving out its harmony at the touch of his fingers. For some time nothing could be heard in the whole of the Math excepting the sound of Rām, Rām, Sri Ram, Ram. Half an hour passed by, and nothing else came out from the lips of all who were present. To-day they were all inebriated with the nectared name of Rama coming out in Swamiji's voice. And at the moment, it occurred to the disciple, was not Swamiji singing the name of Rama to-day actually merging into oneness with the Shiva ideal?† The natural sublimity of Swamiji's countenance seemed to-day to have deepened hundredfold; from the corner of the half-closed eye the splendour of the dawning sun seemed on the point of bursting forth, and it looked as if his whole large frame was about to reel with the intensity of an ineffable intoxication! But ah, the beauty of it all is beyond description, beyond all explanation, and is only an object of realisation within

one's soul. Those who saw it then remained—चित्राङ्गिताम्भ इवावतस्थे—"as if on a painted canvas with their painted attitudes."

After the chanting of Sri Rama's name, Swamiji continued to sing a song of Tulsidas on Sri Ramachandra in the same intoxicated strain of mind. But as there was no good hand at playing on the *Pakhōj*, Swamiji's mental absorption into harmony was evidently being disturbed. So he now asked Swami Saradananda to do the singing and himself took up the *Pakhōj*. The first song the Swami sang was of Swamiji's own composition describing the rise of the creation in Absolute Consciousness. It seemed the stream of the Ganges was rising in a joyous swell at the sublime, voluminous roll of the *Mridanga* and the whole room was tense at the same time with the sweet, pervasive voice of Swami Saradananda. After this song, others which Sri Ramakrishna-deva used to sing himself, were rendered one by one.

After this, Swamiji suddenly took to putting off all the decorations he had on his person and began to dress Girish Babu with them. With his own hands, he applied the sacred ashes and placed the ear-rings, the *rudraksha* bracelets and garlands, and the plaited locks on Girish Babu's body. And Girish Babu by this change of guise was revealed as a new personality, a joyous surprise to all the *bhaktas* present. Then declared Swamiji, "Paramahansa-deva used to say, our brother is the incarnation of Bhairava. There's no distinction between him and us." Girish Babu sat speechless all the time and seemed perfectly resigned to all the manipulations of his monastic brothers engaged in dressing him. A piece of *gerua* was at last brought and he was draped in it and uttered no word of remonstrance. For he had merged his self fully to-day into the wishes of his brothers in discipleship. Swamiji now said: "Well, G. C., you are to speak to us to-day about Thakur. And all of you (turning all

* Bhairavas are the divine companions of Shiva as well as protagonists of the Shiva cult.

† Sri Rama's name is said to constitute such a soul-absorbing *mantra* for Shiva that it intoxicates Him into the highest Samadhi.

around himself) sit quiet and attentive." Even then, Girish Babu sat motionless, voiceless like marble, absolutely lost in joy at the sight of the wonderful workings of the spirit of Him and the abundant joy of the disciples of Him at whose birthday ceremony all were assembled to-day. And when at last he opened his lips, he did so to say, "Ah, what can this humble self speak of our Lord

of unbounded mercy! Verily in this alone I realise that mercy that to me, this lowly creature, He has extended the privilege of sitting and mixing on the same footing with you Sannyasins, pure from your childhood, who have renounced all lust and lucre." While speaking thus, the words choked in his throat and he could not speak anything more that day. (To be continued.)

OCCASIONAL NOTES.

MEN in all parts of the inhabited globe are keenly looking to-day for some great change for the better in the life of all the peoples brought into contact or deeper intercourse by European civilisation. The air is full of coming changes, and reconstruction has become the watchword of human efforts all over the world. The world-convulsing war, it is believed, is bound to work out a great change in the life of all mankind, and it is already doing so. Witness the salutary change in the attitude of the Imperialist, the earthly Providence of millions of human beings, for is it not wonderful that he of all men to-day would declare with the tremendous weight and authority of the spokesman of a nation in war to all belligerents that a great principle for which the nations on his side would fight on even unto death is the principle of political self-determination among all conquered races all over the world?

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And besides this evil of political domination of one people by another, there are other evils of human life which the changes, fondly expected to be soon coming over the life of nations, are going to remedy. For instance, democratisation of all governments is believed to be an inevitable change that the war is working out, and thousands are dying on battle-fields in the faith, shared by many more thousands who may not so die, that the

present war is the supreme factor to minimise war on the globe for all time to come. Men are thus looking forward to the imminent cure of some of the biggest evils of human life. "Hope springs eternal in the human breast," and men have all the more reason to hope for some great good, when the whole world is in travail. But just as when the night is passed in tribulations and people hourly hope for the breaking of the day, their expectant gaze is turned towards the East, so is there no exact direction in which the gaze of a whole expectant world has to be directed in watching the advent of those changes all over the world which will cure the many tormenting evils of life? Does this direction from which the ringing changes will burst forth lie across the sphere of our changing political circumstances, or does it lie across those of social or industrial developments? Where, oh where, shall we direct our watchful attention to catch the very first glimpses of the dawning hope?

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The answer to this question comes from the following utterance of Swami Vivekananda. Speaking in 1897 at Kumbhakonam, Madras, of Europe and latest developments in thought there, Swamiji says, "There, too, they have their thinkers, great men; and they are already finding out that this race after gold and power is all vanity of vanities; many, nay,

most of the cultured men and women there are already weary of this competition, this struggle, this brutality of their commercial civilisation, and they are looking forward to something better. There is a class which still clings on to political and social changes as the only panacea for the evils in Europe, but among the great thinkers there, other ideals are growing. They have found out that no amount of political or social manipulation of human conditions can cure the evils of life. It is a change of the soul itself for the better that alone will cure the evils of life." Whether this true principle for the real betterment of human life on earth has or has not been hopelessly obscured by the dominating issues of the political struggles now raging most furiously all over Europe is a matter for further observation and study. So far as indications go at present, it seems clear that the nations at war, at least, are bent on staking everything on such issues of the war as they firmly believe to be productive of remedial changes sure to bring about the betterment of life on earth. This fervent belief, so fervently expressed every now and then, proves that for curing many existing evils of life, the belligerent peoples at least rely absolutely on the "political manipulation of human conditions," and this belief has now evidently made itself contagious all the world over. Are not most of us, in India even, beginning to build our hopes for our country and its regeneration on the political changes which we expect the keen exigencies of war problems to impose on the present system of government in India?

Evidently therefore, men are to-day looking forward to politics more than to anything else for the cure of the many evils which are preying upon modern life both in India and abroad. In India, for instance, it is earnestly believed that the political upliftment of the people will surely remove the crushing misery and distress which threaten to annihilate

them, and political upliftment can only be brought about by bold changes in the political government of the country, that is, by a proper manipulation of the political conditions under which the people live. This is all very plain on the surface. But a very important premise is unwittingly suppressed in the argument, for no good changes imposed on *outward* conditions can be of any avail unless men are *inwardly* strong to rise equal to those changed conditions of life. And the strength of a whole people can never be judged by the isolated strength of an insignificant minority. The political problem, therefore, really rests on the inward strength which our people can exert for the purpose of political self-possession and political self-government. Even if this strength of self-possession is once acquired by the people, it is bound automatically to work itself out in necessary changes in the political conditions of life. This self-expression from within of the people in India forms not only the real achievement which alone is to cure our political evils, but it should also form the only fundamental aim of all our present efforts for a lasting political settlement with the British power in India. Such settlement is important not for itself, not as the political goal by itself, but as a necessary step to the real political goal which consists in the self-expression of the people in India in their own terms of political life. So the outward changes in the political government in India are bound to remain something like a shadow without a substance if they are not directly followed by an inward upliftment of the people utilising those changes in the interest of their national self-expression. The political upliftment of India, therefore, is not merely a matter for the political manipulation of external conditions; it is really an inward development of the people themselves towards adequate self-possession and self-expression.

Similarly, if we carefully analyse the real

issues which make for the greater democratisation of Western governments and the greater stability of peace among them, we shall find that these issues are all ultimately pivoted on some new favourable development in the inward temper of men, both those who are in power and those who keep them there. It is this inner change, proceeding from depths of the human soul, that has first to translate itself into political and social changes in order that they may have any reality and effectiveness for all the good that they outwardly profess to bring out. And if without this prior, corresponding change in the human soul, beneficial effects are sought to be produced by cleverly working out changes in the mere external conditions of life, if real spiritual or moral upliftment is sought to be superseded by a clever manipulation of outward circumstances as means enough for any betterment in life, disappointment will be the sure outcome. For, "it is a change of the soul itself for the better," as Swamiji says, "that alone can cure the evils of life." The external mechanism of life can only use, but never create, any power for lasting human good. So this power comes from the soul of man, from a sincere aspiration of it alone. And if the nations of the West begin now to recognise this truth, and seek to cure by a sincere faith in soul-force their morbid reliance in all human affairs on the efficiency of mere mechanical force, then only the universal talk of peace to be established on a more stable footing among men may have some reality and force behind it, otherwise it is all mere cant of a political diplomacy bolstering up some appealing end to justify the terrible means it is using in the shape of millions of human lives in the cruel interests of a blood-thirsty political competition.

It is a change of the soul itself for the better that alone can cure the evils of life. This is the great truth from which men have gone astray all over the world. This is the great truth which has long been persistently anta-

gonised by the very spirit of the Western civilisation puffed up with an overweening confidence in the power of machines, of organisations, of man-made laws. The great ambition, the proud challenge of this civilisation has been to cure life of its evils by the clever manipulation of its external means. But God's truth cannot be thus cheated of its due, and evils seemingly disappearing from one part of the surface of modern life have been displaying unprecedented virulence in another, and nowhere has man been able to enrich himself more than his predecessor in olden times in the real peace and the lasting treasures of the soul. In fact, to such a sad pass has the world been brought by Western civilisation with its proud stolid neglect of the human soul and its dynamic potentialities, its blind worship of mechanistic forces in preference to forces born of spiritual upliftment, that the greatest service, it seems, that any individual can render to humanity to-day is to live a life of vigorous protest against this grinding, soulless civilisation! It was to counteract the dangerous influences of this civilisation seeking to mechanise the whole of human life that Swami Vivekananda preached with such invariable insistence the doctrine of the Atman all over the world. For it is the practical unbelief in this doctrine that makes men build too much on the means of life, live too much on shadows and appearances instead of on the only reality of the Atman.

Full of simplicity and grandeur, full of unflinching inspiration for all the greatest effort and achievement in human thought and science, full of ultimate significance and authority for all that spirit of democracy and peace which the whole world is longing to imbibe, this doctrine of One Atman coming out as a bombshell from the Vedic revelation is sure to destroy all the brutal tendencies with which a mechanistic civilisation is vitiating the very springs of human life all over the world. It will open men's eyes to the only real source of all lasting improvements

in life, and instead of staking all efforts and resources, for the sake of such improvements, on constant overhauls in the external mechanism of life, men will value more and strive for changes "in the soul itself for the better," implying a greater and greater manifestation of the One Atman of all beings. For it is only by such spiritual upliftment that any real power for good can come behind human efforts, and unless this happens, it is quite useless and delusive for us to be looking expectantly to political or social changes to bring us any remedy for the evils of life. The question, therefore, with which we began, the question as to the real direction in which we must look for substantial changes for the better to come over human life in the world, is definitely answered. We must first watch for the spiritual upliftment of the people concerned before we expect real changes to come over their life to bring about any decided betterment in it.

So in this psychological moment in world's history, when men are feeling in their mind the foreshadowings of some great change over human life, the most decisive premonition to look for is the coming of a spiritual urge in human hearts all over the world. Apart from the large arena of world problems, do we in India, who keenly watch for some solid improvement in the condition of our country in the immediate future, feel this divine urge towards an upliftment of the soul? There lies the crux of the whole problem for India. For in India, all the degeneration that we see to-day, all the fatuities and miseries of self-disorganisation, are really due to that spiritual degeneration which loosened and snapped the bonds of *dharma* or duty that linked the more intelligent people to the less intelligent masses of the villages. It was certainly a spiritual degeneration that by exposing human nature so easily to the evils and lures of an alien education, made people in the villages so selfish as to break away for

personal advantages from the spiritual moorings of a polity of rural life which at that very critical period of its history, was looking up to these very men to tackle its new problems of self-adaptation created from within and without. But for this wanton breaking away of all the intelligence in the country from its old national moorings of *dharma*, India could have encountered, studied and dealt with the new forces of an alien civilisation without losing its own national poise and foot-hold,—self-possessed, self-conscious and self-united. But instead of this, India cut herself up in twain, one part—the educated classes—running away with ill-digested, ill-assorted ideas and ideals that blinded them to the old scheme of life, and the other part—the "uneducated" masses—left behind in the most selfish spirit of "devil take the hindermost" to struggle in moral and social disintegration without the light and leading which had never failed them through centuries. This intense collective selfishness of a section of the Indian people is ultimately ascribable only to a spiritual apostacy that made them traitors to the real nation in India, namely, her masses in the villages, and it is only by a spiritual outgoing of the very soul of educated India towards the long-neglected masses in the villages that this apostacy and all the evils of disorganisation that have followed in its wake can now be made amends for.

How to develop in our hearts this *spiritual* richness and warmth of feeling for the masses? It is not by any means an easy acquisition, for it implies both a high order of patriotism and of spiritual achievement. When after a long itineracy as a lonely monk mostly among the neglected poor in India, Swami Vivekananda was met unexpectedly near Bombay by two of his wandering brother monks separated from him for long, among the very first glowing words that he uttered to them were the following: "Ah, brother,

I don't know I have mastered within me all the mystery they call religion, but this thing," (patting on his heart) "I see, has immensely broadened out." To this, the reply of the brother Sannyasin was, "Well, what else is religion? Why, you have rather become that very thing itself in flesh and blood!" After this, commenced that world-moving career of the great Sannyasin which from its start to finish may be said, in a very real sense, to have been essentially dedicated to the cause of the poor, the neglected and the down-trodden in India. The very underlying principle of all the schemes that he ever proposed in connection with the uplift of India was his great, flashing dictum that had best be blazoned forth in gold over all the public institutions of our country: "*The fate of a nation depends upon the condition of its masses.*" This ocean-wide, throbbing heart going out towards the helpless masses of his country was in Swamiji's case a wonderful spiritual achievement, and he has expressly bequeathed this new order of spirituality to his countrymen of this age. Shall we not strive our best to-day to acquire this spirituality so that those very changes, to which we so earnestly look forward and which are destined to raise the condition of our country by the most inevitable process, may be worked out through us as the proper instruments in the divine hands of the God of India.

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And if through our sincere individual strivings this new wave of spirituality rises to-

day in our midst, only then can the real work for India's uplift be started among the masses. Otherwise, if we simply approach them with the political shibboleths of the Western brand in our mouths, we shall never be able to inspire them with adequate enthusiasm for their duties as the real units of the Indian nation. And if these real units of the nation are not spiritually lifted up to the pursuit of what is their *dharma* towards the nation, all political manipulations of their external conditions in the hope of bringing about any betterment in their life are bound to prove worse than fruitless in the long run. So what we who live in the hope of India's uplift are required to do to-day is to dedicate to their cause all the spirituality we can acquire of the type represented in Swamiji's life and go to work among them to rekindle in their hearts the old burning sense of their *dharma* by precept and example, so that yoked by it again to the tasks of village improvement, their own initiative in rural self-government may weave out the larger web of real self-government for the whole of India. And the only real beginnings of this happy consummation lie, as we have seen, in the spiritual self-preparation and self-dedication of at least a few hundreds from among the many thousands of those in India who feel exalted to-day by the hope of coming changes calculated to usher in a happier future for their country. Will not even these few among the many respond to the call and devote themselves individually to this task of spiritual self-preparation?

THE REAL PROBLEM FOR EDUCATION COMMISSIONS IN INDIA.

IT is a curious but undeniable fact that in spite of education commissions appointed by Government in India to advise it on educational matters, the real educational problem in India remains as unmooted and untackled as ever.

The last line in the terms of reference set forth in the Government resolution of the 14th Sept. 1917, which appointed the present Calcutta University Commission, runs thus: "and to recommend any changes of constitution, administration and educational policy

which may appear desirable." But from the *questionnaire* circulated by the Commission, we do not see that they have in view the consideration of any such possible change in the educational policy of the Government as may serve to remedy what we have described above as a most curious but undeniable fact.

Still, in view of the serious effort that is being made by the Commission to investigate and study the present educational situation in the country, the following observations concerning this situation and the problem it has created for the educationist, may be found to throw some light on questions which should have some indirect bearing at least on their important task.

The existing system of university education recognises in fact one ultimate source for all the knowledge it seeks to impart, and that is *the text-book*. The teacher's duty is to instil into the students' mind what the text-book contains, and so he dwells on the latter or otherwise tries to amplify it by more extensive references to kindred text-books or to intellectual developments of some points contained in them by his own thought. In any case, the knowledge that is imparted under the present system is all ultimately the knowledge derived from *text-books*. But in England, for instance, the knowledge imparted under her system of university education is knowledge ultimately derived from life, from experience, and text-books are only the convenient media for what actual life or experience has to give to the student. The English system has behind it as its lasting background the English life, both acting and reacting upon each other. And this English system of university education does not admit of being isolated from its background of English life and then imported into another country, for it then loses all its reality and becomes fossilised into the dead matter of text-books.

But this very contingency has been brought about in India by the importation of an English

system of university education, the necessity which mainly justified it being the demand of the British Government here for a constant supply of English-educated men for its various services. A similar supply had to be secured also in a large measure for foreign commercial firms established in India. In this way, the imported university education found itself correlated to new spheres of life created out of, or contiguous to, Government branches of administration and to foreign capitalist firms. The whole life of the country was, of course, profoundly affected by this newly created area superimposed upon it. But neither could the former fully re-adjust and re-arrange itself round this zone of new influences, nor could the latter affiliate itself as a part of the whole. And the reason of this lies in the patent fact that the old pre-British India had been evolved for untold centuries on the basis of an organic scheme of life and culture which it was impossible to twist, torture and fit into the new framework foisted upon it by the new ideals and methods of life embodied in the Western system of Government and its Western system of education. The inevitable consequences flowing from this forced juxtaposition of two mutually irreconcilable sets of cultural forces were, first, the growing disintegration of the whole life of the country, and secondly, the irredeemable artificiality of the bases of both the system of Government and the system of education it helped to set up. Efforts which the Government have been making to popularise the political system and so to remedy this artificiality which concerns themselves directly, require no mention here, but we would point out that the basic artificiality in the system of university education obtaining so long in the country is directly responsible for the growing demand among cultured Indians for what they call national education.

Now, therefore, what is the duty of the true educationist in India? He cannot hope

that the old India of a different scheme of life and a different type of culture will gradually die of inanition, for indications so far have all been to the contrary. And as this India is still living and seeking for self-expression with growing insistence and success, it will neither do to deal with it as we deal with specimens of the dead preserved in museums. That is to say, we should not rest satisfied merely with providing means at our universities for studying the bygone achievements of the ancient Indian culture. But we must be bold enough to recognise the old India with its own scheme of life and culture as still a living fact and factor, still resisting with marked success the cultural conquest of India by the West and fully capable yet of exerting decisive influence on the future of the whole country. However much impoverished in its material means of self-expression, in its crafts and industries, in its arts and sciences, its power is still regnant over millions of men in India, permeating their spiritual outlook on life, creating their deepest enthusiasms, standing sponsor for ever to their highest possibilities. The educationist in India, however officially or formally concerned only with the surface atmosphere of Western education created by the newly established universities, cannot surely afford to ignore this great force, namely, of a culture and a scheme of life that have moulded history in India for untold ages preserving themselves through world-shaking vicissitudes and political convulsions such as would certainly have extinguished the life of any civilisation similarly circumstanced.

Now if once the sincere educationist in India recognises this fact, namely, that the real life of India lies still unreconciled to that newly superimposed area on its surface which is both the creation of the existing system of university education and the only scope of its usefulness, he will easily be able to trace the only source of the vital defects in this system and the only way of removing them. He

will easily detect that the present university education is not at all correlated to the whole life of the country in its integrity, constantly reacting upon it and reacted upon by it in turn, but it is merely connected with an artificial section of that life, a section that has hardly any cultural affinity with the whole and instead of seeking to co-ordinate itself with the latter, serves rather to hasten its disintegration. Having some sort of interdependence only with such an artificial section of Indian life, the present system of university education can naturally never expect to have that reality and life which we find in its prototype in England. For here it draws its sap and sustenance not from the free-flowing stream of a whole people's life, its experiences and achievements; it nourishes itself upon the imported pabulum of text-books; and hardly anything more than that is necessary to train up people who have to work and live amidst artificial environments superimposed on the real life and culture of a country.

The plain duty of the educationist in India, therefore, is to strive to make the Indian university faithfully represent, focus and interpret all the cultural forces operating in the whole of Indian life, and thus to raise it to its true dignity and function. Long has the Indian university pursued the undignified course and the spurious function of blindly helping on the alienation of life against life. Now let it come forward to ally itself with the process of assimilating the new life to the old, so that the old cultural forces may be broadened and rendered fully self-conscious, and freely rise to absorb as part of their being the new healthy forces that have come to stay in India.

The general principles to be applied to bring about this salutary change in the attitude and function of the Indian university, it is not much difficult to indicate. The university when taking up the education of the child should definitely aim at establishing him first of all in the spirit of the old Indian

culture. Both by reference to the ideal in thought and the actual in surrounding life, a clear indication of the spirit must accompany the introduction of the child to his first study of language, history and science. Both the teacher and the text-book must have this purpose clearly in view. And then when the student has been initially established as far as possible in the spirit of the old Indian culture, and is now being introduced through a course of secondary and higher education to different areas of Western thought and culture, let him be trained up to use always his faculty of comparison, assimilation and discrimination, so that as he grows he may develop in thought both the scheme of life in all its aspects and phases as it obtains in India and the parallel scheme of life as it obtains in the West. Thus all the points of contact and contrast in the two systems of life and culture should be matter of knowledge to the grown-up student, and the university should provide him scope for studying

how actual life in India fulfils its various functions in art, agriculture, economics, politics, science and so on, conformably to the spirit and purpose of her own culture. So also in the study of life in the West the student of the Indian university will be enabled to make constant, fruitful reference to the actualities and needs of the life in his own country. In order to enable its students to work and live in the fullest and the most real environment of thought and culture, the university must connect itself with regional cultures and cultural regions supplying them new impetus and encouragement and interpreting their past achievements and future possibilities. Thus the university must go out and diffuse its influence and usefulness all over the country through local institutions for study and instruction, for give-and-take dealings. Then only can the Indian university be made to faithfully represent, focus and interpret all the cultural forces operating in the whole of India.

EPISTLES OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

(*Translated from Bengali.*)

CXXXI.

Salutation to Bhagavan Ramakrishna !

C/o George W. Hale,
541, Dearborn Avenue,
Chicago.
19th March, 1894.

My dear—

I have not written to you since coming to this country. But Haridas Bhai's* letter gives me all the news. It is excellent that

* Haridas Bhai—Ex-Dewan of Junagarh. Shortly before Swamiji left India for America, he became intimately acquainted with this gentleman, and was introduced by him to many Indian princes.

G. C. Ghose† and all of you have treated him with due consideration.

I have no wants in this country, but mendicancy has no vogue here and I have to labour, that is, lecture in places. It is as cold here as it is hot. The summer is not a bit less hot than in Calcutta. And how to describe the cold in winter ! The whole country is covered in snow, three or four feet deep, nay, six or seven feet, at places ! In the Southern parts there is no snow. Snow, however, is a thing of little consideration here. For it snows when the mercury stands at 32° F. In Calcutta it scarcely comes down to 60°

† G. C. Ghose—the great actor-dramatist of Bengal, and a staunch devotee of Sri Ramakrishna,

and it rarely approaches zero in England. But here, your mercury sinks to *minus* 40° or 50°. In Canada, in the North, mercury becomes condensed, when they have to use the alcohol thermometer. When it is too cold, that is, when the mercury stands even below 20° F. it does not snow. I used to think that it must be an exceedingly cold day on which the snow falls. But it is not so, it snows on comparatively warm days. Extreme cold produces a sort of intoxication. No carriages would run; only the sledge, which is without wheels, slides on the ground! Everything is frozen stiff—even an elephant can walk on rivers and canals and lakes. The massive Falls of Niagara, of such tremendous velocity, are frozen to marble!! But I am doing nicely. I was a little afraid at first, but later on, necessity makes me travel by rail to the borders of Canada one day, and the next day finds me lecturing in South America! The carriages are kept quite warm, like your own room, by means of steam pipes, and all around are masses of snow, spotlessly white,—O the beauty of it!

I was mortally afraid that my nose and ears would fall off, but to this day they are all right. I have to go out, however, dressed in a heap of warm clothing, surmounted by a fur-coat, with boots, encased in an woollen jacket, and so on. No sooner you breathe out, than it freezes among the beard and moustache! Notwithstanding all this, the fun of it is that they won't drink water indoors without putting a lump of ice into it. This is, because it is warm indoors. Every room and staircase are kept warm by steam pipes. They are first and foremost in arts and appliances, foremost in enjoyment and luxury, foremost in making money, and foremost in spending it. The daily wages of a coolie are six rupees, as also are those of a servant; you cannot hire a cab for less than three rupees, nor get a cigar for less than four annas. A decent pair of shoes costs twenty-four rupees, and a suit, rupees five hundred. As

they earn, so they spend. A lecture fetches from two hundred up to three thousand rupees. I have got up to five hundred.† Of course now I am in the very heyday of fortune. They like me, and thousands of people come to hear me speak.

So it pleased the Lord, I met here Mr. —. He was very cordial at first, but when the whole Chicago population began to flock to me in overwhelming numbers, then grew the canker in —'s mind! * * * The priests tried their utmost to snub me. But the Guru is with me, what could anybody do? And the whole American nation loves and respects me, pays my expenses, and reveres me as a Guru.....It was not in the power of your priests to do anything against me. Moreover, they are a nation of scholars. Here it would no longer do to say, "We marry our widows," "we do not worship idols," and things of that sort. What they want is philosophy, learning, and empty talk will no more do.

D— is a nice boy. He has not much of learning, but is very gentle. He had a good deal of popularity in this country.

Brother, I have been brought to my senses.... "ये निग्नन्ति परहितं निरर्थकं ते के न जानीमहे।"—We do not know what sort of people they are, who for nothing hinder the welfare of others. (Bhartrihari) Brother, we can get rid of everything, but not of that cursed jealousy.... That is a national sin with us, speaking ill of others, and burning at heart at the greatness of others. Mine alone is the greatness, none else should rise to it!!

Nowhere in the world are women like those of this country. How pure; independent, self-relying and kind-hearted! It is the

† For some time after the Chicago Address Swamiji lectured on behalf of a Lecture Bureau, which task, however, he soon gave up as curtailing his independence, and devoted most of the money thus earned to various charitable works in different parts of India.

women who are the life and soul of this country. All learning and culture are centred in them. The saying "या श्रीः स्वयं सुकृतीनां भवनेषु"—Who is the Goddess of Fortune Herself in the families of the meritorious—holds good in this country, while that other, "पापात्मनां हृदयेष्वलक्ष्मीः"—The Goddess of ill-luck in the hearts of the sinful—applies to ours. Just think on this. Great God! I am struck dumb with wonderment at seeing the women of America,—“त्वं श्रीस्त्वमीश्वरी त्वं ह्रीः” etc.—Thou art the Goddess of Fortune, Thou art the supreme Goddess, Thou art Modesty. “या देवी सर्वभूतेषु शक्तिरूपेण संस्थिता” etc.—The Goddess who resides in all beings as Power. All this holds good here. There are thousands of women here, whose minds are as pure and white as the snow of this country. And look at our girls, becoming mothers below their teens!! Good Lord! I now see it all. Brother, “यत्र नार्यस्तु पूज्यन्ते नन्दन्ते तत्र देवताः”—The gods are pleased where the women are held in esteem.—Says the old Manu. We are horrible sinners; and our degradation is due to our calling women ‘despicable worms,’ ‘gateways to Hell,’ and so forth. Goodness gracious! There is all the difference between heaven and hell!! “यायातव्यतोऽर्थान् व्यदधाति ।”—He adjudges gifts according to the merits of the case. Is the Lord to be hoodwinked by idle talk? The Lord has said, “त्वं स्त्री त्वं पुमानसि त्वं कुमार उत वा कुमारी”—Thou art the woman, Thou art man, Thou art the boy and the girl as well. (Swetaswatra Upa.) And we on our part are crying, “दूरमपसर रे चण्डाल”—Be off, thou outcast! “कैनेषा निर्मिता नारी मोहिनी” &c.—Who has made the bewitching woman? My brother, what experiences I have had in the South of the upper classes torturing the lower! What bacchanalian orgies within the temples! Is it a religion that fails to remove the misery of the poor and turn men into gods! Do you think our religion is worth the name? Ours is only Don't-touchism, only “Touch me not,” “Touch me not.” Good heavens! a country, the big leaders of

which have for the last two thousand years been only discussing whether to take food with the right hand or the left, whether to take water from the righthand side or from the left,.....if such a country does not go to ruin what else will? “कालः सुप्तेषु जागर्ति कालो हि दुरतिक्रमः”—Time keeps wide awake when all else are asleep; Time is invincible indeed! He knows it; who is there to throw dust in His eyes, my friend?

A country where millions of people live on flowers of the *mohua* plant, and a million or two of Sadhus and a hundred million or so of Brahmins suck the blood out of these poor people, without even the least effort for their amelioration—is that a country or hell? Is that a religion, or the devil's dance? My brother, here is one thing for you to understand fully,—I have travelled all over India, and seen this country too—can there be an effect without cause? Can there be punishment without sin?

“सर्वशास्त्रपुराणेषु व्यासस्य वचनं ध्रुवं ।

परोपकारस्तु पुण्याय पापाय परपीडनम् ।”

—Amidst all the scriptures and Puranas, know this statement of Vyasa to be true, that doing good to others conduces to merit, and doing harm to them leads to sin.

Isn't it true?

My brother, in view of all this, specially, of the poverty and ignorance, I got no sleep. At Cape Comorin sitting in Mother Kumari's temple, sitting on the last bit of Indian rock,—I hit upon a plan: We are so many Sannyasins wandering about, and teaching the people metaphysics,—it is all madness. Did not our Gurudeva use to say, ‘An empty stomach is no good for religion’? That those poor people are leading the life of brutes, is simply due to ignorance. We have for all ages been sucking their blood and trampling them under foot.

* * Suppose some disinterested Sannyasins, bent on doing good to others, go from village to village, disseminating education, and seeking in various ways to better the

condition of all down to the Chandála, through oral teaching, and by means of maps, cameras, globes and such other accessories,—can't that bring forth good in time? All these plans I cannot write out in this short letter. The long and short of it is—if the mountain does not come to Mahomet, Mahomet must to the mountain. The poor are too poor to come to schools and *páthshálas*, and they will gain nothing by reading poetry and all that sort of thing. We as a nation have lost our individuality and that is the cause of all mischief in India. We have to give back to the nation its lost individuality and *raise the masses*. The Hindu, the Mahomedan, the Christian all have trampled them under foot. Again the force to raise them must come from inside, that is, from the orthodox Hindus. In every country the evils exist not with, but against, Religion. Religion therefore is not to blame, but men.

To effect this, the first thing we need is men, and the next is funds. Through the grace of our Guru I was sure to get from ten to fifteen men in every town. I next travelled in search of funds, but do you think the people of India were going to spend money!! * * Selfishness personified—are they to spend anything! Therefore I have come to America, to earn money myself, and then return to my country and devote the rest of my days to the realisation of this one aim of my life.

As our country is poor in social virtues, so this country is lacking in spirituality. I give them spirituality and they give me money. I do not know how long I shall take to realise my end. * * These people are not hypocrites, and jealousy is altogether absent in them. I depend on no one in Hindusthan. I shall try to earn the wherewithals myself to the best of my might and carry out my plans, or die in the attempt. “सन्नित्ते वरं त्यागो विनाशे नियते सति।”—When death is certain, it is best to sacrifice oneself for a good cause.

You may perhaps think what Utopian nonsense all this is! You little know what is in me. If any of you help me in my plans, all right, or Gurudeva will show me the way out. * * We cannot give up jealousy and rally together. That is our national sin!! It is not to be met with in this country, and this is what has made them so great.

Nowhere in the world have I come across such ‘frogs-in-the-well’ as we are. Let anything new come from some foreign country, and America will be the first to accept it. But we?—O, there are none like us in the world, we men of Aryan blood!! Where that heredity really comes up, I do not see. * * Yet they are descendants of the Aryans!

Ever yours,

Vivekananda.

FOREST SCHOOLS OF ANCIENT INDIA.

BY SISTER DEVAMATA.

THE natural university of the early Indo-Aryans was the forest. No college campus or cathedral close could offer so still a retreat as was to be found under the high-arching trees of the jungle besides some cool-flowing stream. It was Nature's own cloister made for the student. And here the teacher lived in humble retirement, accepting the pupils who came to him as his own; clothing

them, feeding them, caring for them like sons, and sharing with them whatever of plenty or privation was his. Even the richest were not allowed to pay for their tuition: to impart knowledge as a means of livelihood was regarded in those days as a dishonor, unfitting the teacher for his task. Did not Truth belong to God, how could it be sold by man? Every child was taken as a

sacred charge. Nor did it matter whether few came or many. The schoolroom with its carpet of soft moss and roof of overlapping branches was elastic and could be stretched to any limit. There were also bamboo poles and palm leaves in plenty for the walls and thatch of a new dormitory.

To this secluded woodland college the father brought his boys at the age of eight or ten and surrendered them without reserve to the guidance of the teacher. During the years of schooling there must be no conflict of authority, no counteracting influences. As home and parents had possessed the toddling child, giving him his first lessons by sacred song and story; now at the outset of a new period the boy must be carried into a specialized environment, to live beside one whose whole thought was consecrated to the pursuit of knowledge and whose earnest exalted life was the chief text-book spread open before the scholar's awakening mind. The nursery time was over and the moment came for the graver duties of *Brahmacharya*—service and study. These two factors were given equal place in the daily routine; although, if anything, service received the greater emphasis, as it did in the system of apprenticeship during the Middle Ages. Those wise men of the forest knew that only he who can make himself a servant is ready to receive so great a thing as Truth.

We read in the Chhandogya-Upanishad that when Satyakama came to a sage begging for instruction, he was given four hundred lean cows and told to drive them to a distant pasture and keep them until the drove had multiplied to a thousand. Evidently the deep-seeing eyes of the master discerned that the boy's heart was ripe for solitude and contemplation, hence there could be no better preparatory training than that which would be gained on the high stretches of a lonely mountainside. And so truly did experience bear out his judgment that when at last the patient student, his task accomplished, returned once more to the hermitage, the master greeted him with the words: "Friend, your face shines like one who knows the Truth." Education, as those ancient teachers conceived it, meant primarily a process of purification, a removal of that within, which barred the way of knowledge inherent in every human being; and this was most quickly achieved by the lowlier activities of the common life. Also in this way a more familiar

relation was established and it was believed that the lessons learned through close personal contact between teacher and pupil were of greater value than those taught during class hours—just as more of birds can be learned by one walk through the woods with an ornithologist than in many recitations behind four walls.

Nor was the feminine element lacking in those woodland cloisters; for nearly every forest school had its mother, and the dripping vessel of cold water from the lake or the fagots of wood from the jungle were as often for her needs beside the hearth as for the sacrificial rites of the master before the altar. Now and then, too, her softer heart would plead against the stern discipline of her husband. Thus was it in the house of Satyakama Jabala, after he had become a teacher. When a certain student, Upakosala, had dwelt with him for twelve years patiently serving, his wife made appeal to the master: "This boy is quite exhausted with service. He has carefully tended your fires. Let not the fires themselves blame you, but teach him." Yet Satyakama went away on a journey without having taught him and the boy from sheer grieving could not eat. Then the wife approached him with tender concern, saying: "Student, eat! Why do you not eat?" And the boy replied: "I am full of sorrows and shall take no food." The record makes no further mention of her, but it is evident that she revived his drooping spirits; for soon he returned to his service and out of the fire, which he had so faithfully tended, he heard a voice revealing the knowledge which the master had withheld—perhaps because this final test was necessary to prepare the pupil to grasp it.

The courses of study in these schools were not unlike those followed in the nascent mediaeval universities of the Occident,—a classic instruction with a dominant background of religion. But while in the West religion during that scholastic period was theological and verbose, in Vedic India it tended away from dogma towards silent independent research. The method of imparting instruction also was not the dialectic method of mediaeval Europe, but rather the dialogic method adopted later in Greece by Socrates and Plato. All branches of secular learning in the Indo-Aryan curriculum were classed as "lower knowledge," or the preparatory stage, while "higher knowledge" was defined

as "that by which the Indestructible is apprehended." The chief aim of their study was to reach an ultimate generalization, because they saw that without an understanding of the Final Cause no explanation of the universe could be stable or conclusive. And the student should be so trained that he would be able to apprehend this for himself. Education which merely gave information about things was in their opinion superficial and incomplete. Learning, in other words, was not accepted as a substitute for direct vision. A father, for example, chides a son, who being asked "What is God?" replies with long passages from the Scriptures defining Deity. "That is enough," he says sternly. "You have evidently profited little by your schooling."

Another youth after spending twelve years in the teacher's house returns home self-satisfied and "considering himself well-read." His father deals a telling blow at his pride by putting the question: "My son, since you are so conceited and think yourself so well-informed, have you ever asked for that instruction by which one hears what cannot be heard, perceives what cannot be perceived, knows what cannot be known?" And the youth, humiliated, is forced to admit his ignorance. Also a book-wise Brahmin, who comes again and again to a court offering to teach the king, is told; "Go and learn." Each time, puzzled by the rebuff, he plunges deeper into his study, until at last the true meaning of knowledge bursts upon him and, grown humble, he stays at home. Then the King comes to seek him and asks to be taught of him.

In the Vedic system three distinct stages in the acquisition of knowledge were recognized:—hearing, reflection, and realisation. The first was the period of theory; the second, of experiment and proof; the third, of definite knowledge. In the terms of an educational curriculum, these might be classed as the preparatory school, the college and the final specialized work of the university. The method employed in the last two was strictly empirical. Present day science is not more rigidly exacting in its demands that all statements rest on direct observation and experiment than were those ancient instructors. Thus when Svetaketu is being taught by his own father regarding the True, he is told to bring a fruit of the Nyagrodha tree and break it. "It is broken, Sir." "What do you see

there?" "These seeds, almost infinitesimal." "Break one of them." "It is broken, Sir." "What do you see there?" "Not anything, Sir." Then the sage drives home the lesson: "My son, that subtle essence which you do not perceive, of that very essence this great Nyagrodha tree exists. Out of this subtle essence springs all life. It is the True and thou art It." Then the youth craves to know more and he is told to put some salt in water and leave it until the morning. On the morrow the salt of course could not be seen and the father tells him to taste the water from the bottom, from the surface, from the middle. "How is it?" he inquires. "It is salt everywhere." "Throw it away." The son does so and as the water dries up the salt lies, a white deposit, on the ground. Again a lesson: "Now also in this body, forsooth, you do not perceive the True, my son; but it is always there." Could there be a more vivid tangible demonstration of the reality of the unseen Soul or God?

Thus in the laboratory of nature did they study the hidden facts of life. But it may be objected that this does not bear the character of true scientific analysis. It is rather a moral lesson. So it seems to the Western mind; but to the Indo-Aryan there was no distinction between physical and metaphysical, moral and material. God and Soul were as much objects of empiric study, as were unknown substances in chemistry or the rock strata of geology. For them there was no limit to the area of exact science. It must reach to the very end of creation. And if they seemed often to proceed by inference and analogy, so also does the modern scientist when he frames a fresh hypothesis based on the observation of some new and unexplained operation in Nature. This stage, moreover, was wholly primary in their scheme of education and the student was not expected to stop until he had found an original demonstration for every theorem thus propounded. In the ancient writings we find it recorded that the master sometimes did no more than repeat the initial equation each time the pupil returned with an answer, and the student was thus led on and on until wholly by his own thought processes he reached an ultimate solution.

The man of science, however, must have instruments, it may be said. Yes, and those age-old teachers knew it as well as the instructors of to-day;

but almost at the outset they made the valuable discovery that nature had provided every human being with an instrument of wider range and more delicate adjustment than any man could make with his own hands,—the instrument of the human mind; and the aim of all their instruction was to give their pupils a thorough command of this. Therefore the pupil was trained in concentration, meditation and intravision as to-day we are taught the use of microscope or telescope. Nor was this a mere idle subjective theory. There can be no doubt of its practical validity; for centuries before the Christian era we find these wise forest-masters teaching virtually all the axiomatic truths of modern science,—the equilibrium of forces, the indestructibility of matter, the uniformity of law, and the vital fact of evolution. Also they had a remarkable understanding of the human organism, its control and use. How did they discern these things? By studying Nature they discovered that the swifter and finer the vibration, the greater the penetrative force; and since focussed thought was the swiftest and finest vibration known, it should be able to pierce the densest veil of matter. Working on this hypothesis, they soon discovered that creation was a loosely woven mesh, easily penetrated by the trained and subtle gaze. This makes plain why in their system of education such stress was laid on the rigid discipline of body, mind and senses, for these were the student's instruments and must be well-tempered.

In those ancient days there was no break in the course of study. The school merged automatically into the university. It was customary for the scholars to remain in their teacher's house for eight, ten or twelve years. At the expiration of that term the father came to take his sons, leaving a thank-offering had he wealth. But often it happened that among the sons some one showed such aptitude for study that he remained longer with the teacher, and in the course of time he might even build his own bamboo hut and settle permanently in the jungle. Thus round the nucleus of a simple school-master's thatched cottage there grew up extended seats of learning. Often, too, scholars in advanced grades came. Thus only ripe and thoughtful minds could have formulated such questions as appear at the outset of one of the sacred records of the time: "Whence are we born, whereby do we

live and whither do we go? Should time, or Nature, or necessity, or chance, or the elements be the cause, or He who is called the Supreme Person (the Personal God or the Creator)? Or is the Absolute the cause?" Also that more ancient pupil in the Rig-Veda must have passed beyond the primary grade when he begged to be taught "that, knowing which all else is known." In another record we read that Narada approached the venerable Sanatkumara and said: "Teach me, Sir." And Sanatkumara replied: "Please tell me what you already know; afterward I shall tell you what comes after." Narada then enumerates the studies he has completed: "I know the four Vedas, Grammar, the rules for certain sacrifices, the science of numbers, the science of portents and of time, logic, ethics, etymology, pronunciation, ceremonial and prosody, the science of weapons, astronomy, and the fine arts (the making of perfumes, dancing, singing, playing, etc.). But, Sir, with all this I know the Sacred Books only, I do not know the Self or Spirit within." And the master replies: "Whatever you have read is a name only."

This strikes the keynote of all ancient Indo-Aryan teaching. The knowledge of this world was by no means despised. On the contrary, nowhere was learning more eagerly cultivated; but the pupil was never allowed to forget that without the illuminating flash of Soul-consciousness, all was but a dead letter, a lightless lantern. And his craving for the higher attainment was fired by such promises as this: "If you were to tell this truth to a dry stick, branches would grow and leaves spring from it." Or again: "If a man knows the underlying Truth of all things here, that is the true end of life. The wise who have thought on all things and discovered the Divine Essence in them, attain immortality." "He who knows Him who has no beginning and no end, in the midst of chaos, creating all things, having many forms, alone enveloping everything, is freed from all fetters." What wonder that, with such words of hope ringing in their ears, young men lingered year after year in some quiet retreat striving with heightening fervor to plunge deeper and deeper into the hidden recesses of knowledge? Thus the forests became populous with men—and women too—as flame with the desire to know that ultimate unit by knowing

which all else would become plain. Sometimes they gathered into groups called hermitages, which grew to number many hundreds. Bodily needs were reduced to the simplest formula in order that the major portion of time and energy might be devoted to the quest of Truth. They married, but with the lofty aim of creating the best possible environment and conditions for enlightened souls to incarnate; and it is said that children were born among them with such aptitude for knowledge that even in tender years they attained super-conscious vision.

Nor was their life over-grave and joyless. The note struck in a hymn of the Rig-Veda:—"Let the oxen work merrily, let the men work merrily, let the plough move on merrily, fasten the traces merrily," is characteristic of all true Vedic teaching. The West regards it as pessimistic because it sets small value on those things which the Occident prizes, just as to a boy the grown-up who prefers a lonely walk to base-ball or cricket seems a misanthrope. But whoever takes delight in his task is

an optimist, and no people ever found deeper delight in any labor than did the Indo-Aryan in his search after the Ultimate Reality. Could a dejected heart have given voice to that verse of the Vedas: "Out of joy the universe has come, in joy it lives and back to joy it goes"? In the scheme of life developed by the Aryans of India we find no conflict of ideals, no contradictions or inconsistencies. The home, the school and the temple all faced in the same direction. There was as natural an orientation in the performance of the homely tasks of the household as in the setting up of an altar, and no scholar ever began his schooling without bowing before the family shrine and invoking the blessings of the Most High. The goal of all their efforts was one, which may be summed up in the words spoken by a saintly teacher to a worthy pupil in the Chhandogya-Upanishad: "The Infinite is bliss. There is no true bliss in anything finite. The Infinite alone is bliss. This Infinite, however, we must desire to understand."

—*The Message of the East.*

VIVEKACHUDAMANI.

(Continued from page 19)

॥ ब्रह्म सत्यं जगन्मिथ्येत्येवंरूपो विनिश्चयः ।

॥ सोऽयं नित्यानित्यवस्तुविवेकः समुदाहृतः ॥२०॥

20 A firm conviction of the mind to the effect that Brahman is real and the universe unreal is designated as the discrimination (Viveka) between the real and the unreal.

॥ तद्वैराग्यं जिहासा या दर्शनश्रवणादिभिः ।

॥ देहादिब्रह्मपर्यन्ते ह्यनित्ये भोगवस्तुनि ॥२१॥

21. Vairagya or renunciation is the desire to give up all transitory enjoyments (ranging) from those of an (animate) body to those of Brahmâhood, (having already known their defects) from observation, instruction and so forth.

[From those.....Brahmâhood.—Brahmâ is the highest being in the scale of relative existence. The seeker after Freedom has to transcend this scale, undetained by enjoyments implying subject-object relation, and realise his Self as Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute.

Having already known etc.—दर्शनश्रवणादिभिः may also be rendered as, "(the giving up being effected) through all the enjoying organs and faculties."]

॥ विरज्य विषयव्राताहोपहृष्ट्या मुहुर्मुहुः ।

॥ खलक्ष्ये नियतावस्था मनसः शम उच्यते ॥२२॥

22. The resting of the mind steadfastly on its Goal (viz. Brahman) after having detached itself from the manifold of sense-objects by continually observing their defects, is called Sama or calmness.

विषयेभ्यः परावर्त्य स्थापनं स्वस्वगोलके ।

उभयेषामिन्द्रियाणां स दमः परिकीर्तितः ।

बाह्यानालम्बनं वृत्तेरेषोपरतिरुत्तमा ॥२३॥

23. Turning both kinds of sense-organs away from sense-objects and placing them in their respective centres is called Dama or self-control. The best Uparati or self-withdrawal consists in the mind-function ceasing to act by means of external objects.

[Both kinds of organs—viz. The organs of knowledge and those of action.]

सहनं सर्वदुःखानामप्रतीकारपूर्वकम् ।

चिन्ताविलापरहितं सा तितिक्षा निगद्यते ॥२४॥

24. The bearing of all afflictions without caring to redress them, being free (at the same time) from anxiety or lament on their score, is called Titiksha or forbearance.

शास्त्रस्य गुरुवाक्यस्य सत्यबुद्ध्यवधारणम् ।

सा श्रद्धा कथिता सद्भिर्व्या वस्तूपलभ्यते ॥२५॥

25. Acceptance by firm judgment of the mind as true of what the scriptures and the Guru instruct, is called by the sages Sraddhā or faith, by means of which the Reality is perceived.

[Acceptance by firm judgment etc.—Not to be confused with what is generally called blind acceptance. The whole mind must attain to that perfect state of assured reliance on the truth of instructions received, without which a whole-hearted, one-pointed practice of those instructions is not possible.]

सर्वदा स्थापनं बुद्धेः शुद्धे ब्रह्मणि सर्वदा ।

तत्समाधानमित्युक्तं न तु चित्तस्य लालनम् ॥२६॥

26. Not the mere indulgence of thought (in curiosity) but the constant concentration of the intellect (or the affirming faculty) on the ever-pure Brahman is what is called Samādhāna or self-settledness.

[Not the mere indulgence etc.—That is, not the mere intellectual or philosophical satisfaction in

thinking of or studying the Truth. The intellect must be sought to be resolved into the higher activity of concentration on the Truth.]

अहंकारादिदेहान्तान् बन्धानवानकल्पितान् ।

स्वस्वरूपावबोधेन मोक्षमिच्छा मुमुक्षुता ॥२७॥

27. Mumukshutā or yearning for freedom is the desire to free oneself, by realising one's true nature, from all bondages from that of egoism to that of the body,—bondages superimposed by Ignorance.

मन्दमध्यमरूपापि वैराग्येण समादिना ।

प्रसादेन गुरोः सेयं प्रवृद्धा सूर्यते फलम् ॥२८॥

28. Even though torpid or mediocre, this yearning for freedom, through the grace of the Guru, may bear fruit (being developed) by means of Vairagya (renunciation), Sama (calmness), and so on.

वैराग्यं च मुमुक्षुत्वं तीव्रं यस्य तु विद्यते ।

तस्मिन्नेवार्थवन्तः स्युः फलवन्तः समादयः ॥२९॥

29. In his case verily whose Renunciation and yearning for freedom are intense, calmness and the other practices have (really) their meaning and bear fruit.

एतयोर्मन्दता यत्र विरक्तत्वमुमुक्षयोः ।

मरौ सलिलवच्चत्र समादेर्भानमात्रता ॥३०॥

30. Where (however) this Renunciation and yearning for freedom are torpid, there calmness and the other practices are as mere appearances, like water in a desert!

[Mere appearances etc.—i. e. they are without any stability and may vanish like the mirage any time. For without burning renunciation and desire for Freedom, the other practices may be swept off by a strong impulse of मोह or some strong blind attachment.]

मोक्षकारणसामग्र्यां भक्तिरेव गरीयसी ।

स्वस्वरूपानुसन्धानं भक्तिरित्यभिधीयते ॥३१॥

31. Among things conducive to Liberation, Devotion (Bhakti) alone holds the supreme

place. The seeking after one's real nature is designated as Devotion.

[*The seeking etc.*—This definition is from the Advaita standpoint. Dualists who substitute Isvara, the Supreme Lord, for the Atman or Supreme Self immanent in being, of course define Bhakti otherwise. For example, Narada defines it as सा कस्मैचित् परमप्रेमरूपा—“It is of the nature of extreme love to some Being,” and Sandilya, another authority on the subject, puts it as सा परानुरक्तिरीश्वरे—“It is extreme attachment to Isvara, the Lord.” On reflection it will appear that there is not much difference between the definitions of the two schools.]

स्वात्मतत्त्वानुसन्धानं भक्तिरित्यपरे जगुः ।

उक्तसाधनसंपन्नस्तत्त्वजिज्ञासुरात्मनः ।

उपसीदेद्गुरुं प्राज्ञं यस्माद्बन्धविमोक्षणम् ॥३२॥

32. Others maintain that the inquiry into the truth of one's own Self is Devotion. The inquirer about the truth of the Atman who is possessed of the above-mentioned means of attainment should approach a wise preceptor, who confers emancipation from bondage.

[*Truth of one's own self &c.*—This is simply putting the statement of the previous Sloka in another way, for we are the Atman in reality, though ignorance has veiled the truth from us.

Above-mentioned—i. e. in Slokas 19 and 31.]

भोजियोऽवृजिनोऽकामहतो यो ब्रह्मवित्तमः ।

ब्रह्मण्युपरतः शान्तो निरिन्धन इवानलः ।

महेतुकदयासिन्धुर्बन्धुरानमतां सताम् ॥३३॥

33. Who is versed in the Vedas, sinless, unsmitten by desire and a knower of Brahman par excellence, who has withdrawn himself into Brahman, calm, like fire that has consumed its fuel, who is a boundless reservoir of mercy that knows no reason, and a friend of all good people who prostrate themselves before him ;—

[*Fire....fuel.*—Cf. Svetasvatara, VI. 19. The state of mergence in Brahman, and the perfect cessation of all activity of the relative plane is meant.

The Sloka is an adaptation of the language of *Srutis*.]

तमाराध्य गुरुं भक्त्या प्रह्वप्रश्रयसेवनैः ।

प्रसन्नं तमनुप्राप्य पृच्छेज्ज्ञातव्यमात्मनः ॥३४॥

34. Worshipping that Guru with devotion, and approaching him, when he is pleased with prostration, humility and service, (he) should ask him what he has got to know.

स्वामिन्नमस्ते नतलोकबन्धो

कारुण्यसिन्धो पतितं भवाब्धौ ।

मामुद्धरात्मीयकटाक्षदृष्ट्या

ऋज्व्यातिकारुण्यसुधाभिवृष्ट्या ॥३५॥

35. “O Master, O friend of those that bow to thee, thou ocean of mercy, I bow to thee ; save me, fallen as I am into this sea of birth and death, with a straightforward glance of thine eye, which sheds nectar-like grace supreme.

[The expression, abounding in hyperbole, is characteristically Oriental. The meaning is quite plain.]

दुर्वारसंसारदवाग्निमतं

दोषूयमानं दुरदृष्टवातैः

भीतं प्रपन्नं परिपाहि मृत्योः

शरण्यमन्यद्यदहं न जाने ॥३६॥

36. “Save me from death, afflicted as I am by the unquenchable fire of this world-forest, and shaken violently by the winds of an untoward lot, terrified and (so) seeking refuge in thee, for I do not know of any other man with whom to seek shelter.

[*Forest-fire &c.*—The world (*Samsāra*) is commonly compared to a wilderness on fire. The physical and mental torments are referred to.

Untoward lot—the aggregate of bad deeds done in one's past incarnations, which bring on the evils of the present life.]

शान्ता महान्तो निवसन्ति सन्तो

वसन्तवह्लोकहितं चरन्तः ।

तीर्णाः स्वयं भीमभवाश्च जना-
नहेतुनान्यान्पि तारयन्तः ॥३७॥

37. "There are good souls calm and magnanimous, who do good to others as does the spring, and who having themselves crossed this dreadful ocean of birth and death, help others also to cross the same, without any motive whatsoever.

[*Do good.....spring*—i. e. unmasked, out of their heart's bounty, as the spring infuses new life into animate and inanimate nature, unobserved and unsought. The next Sloka follows up the idea.]

अयं स्वभावः स्वत एव यत्पर-

श्रमापनोदप्रवशां महात्मनाम् ।

सुधांशुरेव स्वयमर्ककर्कश-

प्रभाभितप्तामवति क्षितिं किल ॥३८॥

38. "It is the very nature of the magnanimous to move of their own accord towards removing others' troubles. Here, for instance, is the moon who, as everybody knows, voluntarily saves the earth parched by the flaming rays of the sun.

(To be continued.)

REVIEWS.

1. *Aggressive Hinduism*, by the Sister Nivedita of Rk.-V. Published by Brahmachari Ganendranath, Udbodhan Office, 1 Mukherji Lane, Baghbazar, Calcutta. Price Annas 4.

The reading public, that section specially of it which is ever on the look-out for recorded words that inspire, ennoble and create the will to achieve nobly in life, will feel much beholden to the publisher for his bringing out this booklet again to the light of day. The Sister Nivedita stands in the front rank of those Indian workers in Time's vineyard through whom the mighty process becomes self-conscious, the process by which "the old order changeth yielding place to new." And yet it is the old that comes out to live over again as *the new*. The distinction there is surely, but the transfiguration is no less clear and sure. With this true spirit of healthy transition actuating the movement of all her thoughts on India's future, Sister Nivedita's glowing words of faith, her masterly statements of truth, her facile expressions, make the four little essays which comprise the pamphlet a luminous philosophy of our present duties, an inspiring revelation of our future possibilities. What with the striking cheapness of its price,—and the value and indispensableness of the words written in it, we hope the little book will find its way into the hands of all readers of English

who want sincerely to think and work for India and her future.

2. *Speeches and Writings of Sarojini Naidu*: published by G. A. Natesan & Co., Madras; pages 248, price Re. One.

This is one of those interesting volumes by publishing which Messrs. G. A. Natesan & Co. of Madras (whose example in this line has happily proved contagious) have been serving to intensify much of that national work which prominent national leaders have been doing for the uplift of India. The present volume is indeed a most acceptable one, for it presents to us in a well-sustained, delightful panorama of about 250 pages, the noble feelings and sentiments of a noble daughter of India who in her life, above all other things, was most advantageously taught, and who assiduously taught herself, *to feel nobly, to feel beautifully*. The sincerity and ardour of her expression would make these collected utterances a great source of strength to many of the workers in India's cause. We pray for long life to this patriot-daughter, this dear little song-bird, of mother India, frail in body but flaming forth all over the country with the inspiration of lofty sentiments,—so that other weighty volumes may be one day added to the present collection of what she has

already spoken to kindle among her countrymen a burning spirit of service and love to their motherland.

3. *The Presidential Address* of the Hon'ble Sir John Woodroffe at the first session of the All-India Cow Conference (Calcutta, Dec. 1917).

We very much wish this valuable address, which has been printed separately, as it has reached us, in pamphlet form, foolscap size, to gain as wide a publicity as possible in our country, so that all educated men and through them their less fortunate countrymen may be helped thereby to have a clear grasp of the great problem of the Cow in India. For this is one of the very root-problems in India, and in the degeneration of the Indian Cow may be read the sad tale of many Indian problems of degeneration. The cow, the symbol of self-diffusing wealth and the Brâhmana, the symbol of self-diffusing Dharma (which is to guide one and all in the land) were once supposed to be the two pillars on which the destiny of India rested. The Brahmana forgot the spirit and purpose of Indian nationalism and Dharma declined to a moribund state. The suction of exploitation was driven deep into the soil made abnormally yielding by national disorganisation, and wealth comes to be to the slaving multitudes a by-gone dream and with it the cow a luxury that may but raise a silent

sigh of impossible hope. And yet all this despair must have to be turned into new determination to retrieve what is lost. And we shall highly congratulate the Cow Conference that sat in Calcutta last December, if it succeeds in at least helping to educate our people in the duties that we owe to-day to the cow in India. The further problem as to how these duties have to be approached by the Indian people, approached in what spirit and along what line of enthusiasm, will demand our consideration when once our attention has been drawn to the deplorable state of things. What we badly require in the very first place is education in the terrible realities of the situation and our duties expressed in any intelligible terms. The Presidential Address at the Cow Conference is a masterly presentation of these realities and these duties. And though the Conference expressly met on the basis of the economic aspect of the cow problem, the Presidential Address rivets and stimulates our interest because of the many illuminating references in it to broader problems of Indian regeneration, of the revival of the ancient Eastern attitude towards the cow, of the reawakening of the old sense of Swadharma in the people and so on. In a word, the whole address ought to occupy a permanent place in our literature both for its practical value and for its valuable background of right sentiment.



THE FOURTEENTH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MAYAVATI CHARITABLE DISPENSARY.

(January to December 1917.)

In December 1917 the Mayavati Charitable Dispensary has completed another year of its existence, and we have great pleasure in submitting a brief report of its activities during the year. On perusal it will be found that the returns of the outdoor dispensary are comparatively small this year. This partial relief of pressure on that department is due to a certain extent to the opening of a Government Dispensary at Lohaghat. This how-

ever will not take away from the popularity of the Mayavati Charitable Dispensary, which being conducted by Sadhus inspires a peculiar faith among the people as to the efficacy of treatment. The indoor department was tolerably busy this year with cases requiring careful treatment and nursing, and the Homœopathic section also has been growing into importance, and treated over 80 cases. The following statistics will give the details of work :—

(a) Statement of Diseases Treated from
January to December 1917.

Names of diseases	Outdoor	Indoor	Total
Specific Infections :—			
Small-pox ...	1		1
Syphilis ...	2		2
Malarial Fever ...	36	2	38
Nervous System :—			
Debility ...	3		3
Neuralgia ...	10		10
Respiratory System :—			
Coryza ...	7		7
Bronchitis ...	4		4
Pneumonia ...	0	1	1
Asthma ...	2		2
Digestive System :—			
Mouth and tooth	6		6
Dyspepsia ...	3		3
Diarrhoea ...	5	2	7
Dysentery ...	11		11
Peritonitis ...		1	1
Worms ...	17		17
Gastritis ...		1	1
Liver Complaints—	5		5
Ductless Glands and			
Lymphatic System :—			
Kidney ...	2	1	3
Anæmia with Dropsy	2	2	4
Goitre ...	7		7
Generative System :—			
Gonorrhœa ...	6		6
Leucorrhœa ...	3		3
Amenorrhœa ...	2		2
Dysmenorrhœa ...	2		2
Locomotive System :—			
Rheumatism ...	18	1	19
Gout ...	2		2
Diseases of the Skin	24		24
„ „ Eye	31	1	32
„ „ Ear	5		5
Surgical cases ...	23		23
Pyrexia of unknown			
origin ...	8		8
Other diseases ...	11		11
Total	258	12*	270

* Of the 12 patients treated in the Indoor department 1 died from Pneumonia.

(b) Statement of Religion and Sex of Patients :

Outdoor	Outdoor
Hindus ... 254	Men ... 145
Christian ... 4	Women ... 53
258	Children 58
	258

Indoor
Hindus ... 12Indoor
Men ... 8
Women ... 2
Children 2(c) Statement of receipts and disbursements from
January to December 1917.

Receipts	Rs.	As.	P.
Last year's balance ...	240	13	9
Subscriptions and Donations for the year 1917, already acknowledged in the P. B. ...	526	0	3
Total Rs. ...	766	14	0

Disbursements	Rs.	As.	P.
Doctor's travelling expenses ...	40	0	0
„ Maintenance & other necessities	166	1	0
Medicines bought ...	54	8	0
Freight and Cooly hire etc. for Do...	14	7	0
Bedstead for indoor patients ...	13	15	9
Milk for patients ...	0	2	0
Total Rs. ...	289	1	9
Balance in hand Rs. ...	477	12	3

The Dispensary has all along depended on the generosity of the public for its maintenance and looks forward to a continuance of the same in future. The demands for service of sick indigent people in this backward region is very great and we earnestly appeal to all kind-hearted souls for funds to carry on our humble work of service for suffering Narayanas.

Contributions, however small, will be gratefully accepted and acknowledged by the undersigned.

SWAMI PROGNA NADA,

Secy., M. C. D.

Mayavati, Lohaghat P. O., Almora.

NEWS AND NOTES.

As already announced, the 83rd birthday anniversary of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna comes off on the 14th March next, and the public celebration thereof will take place at the Belur Math and its Branch Centres on the Sunday following, that is, on March 17, 1918. We request our kind readers to send us reports of the same for publication in the Prabuddha Bharata, as early as possible after the celebration is over.

THE thirteenth anniversary of the *Kalpatape Festival* of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna was celebrated on the 1st of January 1918 and the previous evening at Babu Harekrishna Bhuyan's Lodge, near the Cuttack Town Hall. The programme consisted of: Nagar Kirtan on the 31st December evening; Prabhati Kirtan, Bhajana and Reading from the Scriptures in the morning of 1st January; feeding the poor at noon, followed by a Lecture on "Sri Sri Ramakrishna Deva," Arati and Kirtan, with distribution of Prasada terminating the happy proceedings.

SWAMI Sarvananda of the Ramkrishna Mission, Madras, who was invited by the Ceylonese Bhaktas to visit certain parts of the country, delivered a lecture on "The cult of the Coming Man" at the Ridgeway Memorial Hall, Pettah, on Thursday, December 27, 1917, at 6-30 p. m. We hope to publish a fuller account of his activities in Ceylon in the coming issue of Prabuddha Bharata.

A public religious meeting of the Calcutta Vivekananda Society (78/1 Cornwallis Street) came off on Sunday, the 2nd February last, at 6 p. m. in the Hall of the Bengal Theosophical Society, when Pandit Kokileshwar Sastri Vidyaratna, Professor of Vedanta, Calcutta University, delivered his second lecture on "Is the Universe Unreal according to Advaitism." Pandit Kokileshwar is a well-known figure in Bengali literature and the Calcutta Vivekananda Society is to be congratulated upon its success in organising this series of lectures.

THE following is the report of the Rk. Mission Sevashrama, Brindaban, for the month of December, 1917:—

There were 16 old indoor cases and 25 new admissions, of which 32 were discharged cured, 3 died and 6 were still under treatment at the end of the year. There were 2645 outdoor cases, of which 435 were new entries and 2210 their repetitions. Besides 5 persons were helped with medicines and doctor's visit free of charge in their own homes. The total receipts of the month including those for the building fund were Rs. 179-7-0 and the expenditure amounted to Rs. 183-14-0 and Rs. 242-11-3 from the general and building funds respectively.

FLOOD RELIEF WORK :—Owing to the collapsing of the Alwar bund, a part of Muttra District was seriously affected, which necessitated relief work. Two centres of relief were opened for the purpose—one at Radhakunda and the other at Barsana, and 1454 patients belonging to some 24 villages, surrounding the centres obtained relief; 75 patients were being treated in their own homes and some were supplied with diet and clothing also. The relief work is still going on. Any contribution, however small, for this as well as for the general upkeep of the Sevashrama will be thankfully received by the Hon. Secretary, Rk. Mission Sevashrama, Bangshibat, Brindaban, Dt. Muttra.

THE ninth Annual General Meeting of the Ramkrishna Mission will be held at the Belur Math premises on the 7th April 1918, at 3-30 p. m. The agenda of business to be taken up at the meeting, subject to alterations, are as follows: 1. To consider the General Report of the Mission. 2. To sanction the amendment in the Bye-laws. 3. To elect auditors for the Mission. 4. To elect members proposed at the meeting. The presence of the members at the meeting is solicited.